

Angelica at the San Diego Workforce Partnership Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program

During the summer of 2010, Angelica was almost a year into her unemployment benefits. She had lost her job in property management due to misinterpretation of the California Labor Code regarding breastfeeding while working. Productivity was always the name of her game, and during her unemployment she found herself slipping further and further into a depression that left her sitting on the couch doing absolutely nothing. Her husband's grandmother called her and told her about a grant she had heard about that would pay for studies in the medical field, but she did not know any specifics.

Angelica began looking online for this grant and somehow stumbled across a phone number for information. After a few phone transfers, she was connected with Cindy Perry, the director of the San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance.

Angelica was excited to have something to look forward to, but it turned out that the grant was still in the works and nowhere near ready for disbursement. Angelica asked what she could do in the meantime and was told to think about what she would like to do. She called back a month later with her list and was advised to go on tours of schools and choose the one she liked (the grantee didn't even know the dollar amount of the grant yet), so Angelica went on some tours. A month later she called with her list of favorites and was told that the grant was not ready yet.

Her persistence opened the door for her to be the first one to complete an application and a personal assessment with Cindy. Her scores were great, and she left with paperwork in hand. Her next stop was UEI College, where, when she told them she had qualified for the HPOG program, her enrollment began.

Angelica had always been a great student and had worked since she was 15. Unemployment had placed her in an emotional/mental state she had never experienced before, one where dreams, goals, and aspirations fell by the wayside. Angelica was unrecognizable to herself, and she had two little ones who needed her. She could not afford to just roll into a little ball and disappear. This grant gave her a reason to get up and get dressed. Her experience at UEI ended with an externship at a company where she was ultimately hired after 30 days. She has been employed for a little over a year now and is thankful for the grandmother who thought to share her knowledge of this grant.

Angelica's first paycheck at this new job came one week after her last unemployment check. Talk about a blessing! One fringe benefit of having worked with this HPOG program is that it lit the fire that had once burned regarding her education. Angelica will continue her education and strive for excellence!

**Alex at the San Diego Workforce Partnership
Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry
Program**

Alex came to the Bridge to Employment program because she was struggling to make ends meet with her previous employment options. She was seeking assistance in obtaining an entry-level certificate and job experience in the healthcare field. Her long-term goal is to become a nurse, but she recognized she would need to take several steps along the way, starting with a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate and then hopefully pursuing a Licensed Vocational Nurse certificate.

Alex shared the difficulties of being a single mother with her navigator and identified childcare and housing as her most pressing barriers. Due to her strong work ethic, she had a good work history but no formal job training post-high school. This situation created a skills gap barrier as well. After she enrolled in the program, Alex was forced to move from her previously stable housing, adding yet another barrier to her employment goals. She contacted her navigator to explore resources and options for housing while she completed training.

The Bridge to Employment program assisted Alex by developing a plan that addressed barriers and identified types of support the program could give her. They included tuition support to cover the cost of the CNA program as well as transportation assistance and items required by the CNA training program. Alex was between jobs during this period, and she lacked financial resources to cover these important items. By working with her navigator during her housing crisis, she was able to identify other housing options. The program assisted in covering the expense of her CNA licensure and also provided support and accountability toward that goal.

Currently Alex is in a stable housing situation and has completed all of the course requirements for the CNA program. She is working toward retaking her CNA exam and has obtained full-time employment as a caregiver at Las Villas del Norte. Her new employment was made possible by her recent training as a CNA. She has also identified an LVN program and completed the admissions steps to get started in October 2012.